Special Article.

Who Is Responsible For Deadlock

Muslim Position Explained

By "OBSERVER"

HIS Excellency the Viceroy has appealed to the Indian Political Parties to compose their differences and work together for the prosecution of the war. It is rather surprising that the Viceroy should have directed his appeal towards all the Indian Political Parties collectively, while there is none amongst them except the Congress which is not anxious to bridge the gulf and willing to work whole-heartedly for the defence of India.

Already the Princes have been fully co-operating because there stands no difficulty in their way. The scheduled classes, disorganised, as they are, are always prepared to side any one who is just and fair to them. There are 100 Million Musalmans, fully organised under the banner of the Muslim League, capable of not only expressing their national will but carrying it through. They had responded to the very first appeal of His Excellency the Viceroy.

Muslim Offer

Mr. Jinnah, the accredited leader of Muslim India, had told the Viceroy just after the declaration of war that in case the Muslim leadership and the All-India Muslim League was taken into full confidence Muslim India would co-operate whole-heartedly with the Government in the war efforts. The League in its statement of September 18, 1939 had declared:

"If full, effective and honourable co-operation of the Musalmans is desired by the British Government in the grave crisis which is facing the world to-day and if it is desired to bring it to a successful termination it must create a sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Musalmans and take into its confidence the Muslim League which is the only organisation that can speak on behalf of Muslim India."

The League pointed out all the ways and means in the said statement whereby the required sense of security and satisfaction should be created among the Musalmans. This was followed by the Viceroy's declaration of October 18, 1939 in which His Majesty's Government emphatically repudiated the unfounded claim of the Congress that the latter alone represented the whole of India. His Majesty's Government also recognised the fact that the All-India Muslim League alone truly represented Muslim India and could speak on its behalf. The rights and interests of the minorities and other interests concerned were also recognised. But the Viceroy's statement fell short of the League's demand as embodied in its statement of September 18, 1939.

The Demand

The working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, therefore, passed the following resolution on October 22, 1939, clarifying its previous demand:

"The opposition of the Muslim League is not merely to the details of the plans embodied in the Act of 1935 and the reconsideration thereof but their demand is that the entire problem of India's future constitution should be wholly examined and revised *de novo*. The Committee reiterate emphatically that no future plan of Indian Constitution will be acceptable to the Muslim League unless it meets their full approval".

But at the same time the Committee, fully appreciating the urgency of the matter, authorised the President to take such steps as he may consider proper to have the doubts removed and secure complete clarification of His Fxcellency's statements, and if the President was fully satisfied the Committee empowered him to give assurance of co-operation and support on behalf of the Muslims of India to the British Government for the purpose of prosecution of the war.

Importance

His Majesty's Government fully realised the importance of the League leaders' suggestion that unless the Central Government was constituted in such a manner as to command the confidence of the people, that effective support would not be forthcoming which the seriousness of the occasion and the situation demanded. They also recognised the existence of acute differences between the Congress and the League in the provincial matters which were being administered to the detriment of the Musalmans. The Viceroy interviewed leaders of various shades of opinion and lastly met Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Gandhi and B. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of the Congress, in a joint conference. The Viceroy made certain concrete proposals to the three leaders at the Conference, which were contained in his letter of November 2, 1939. The viceroy stated:

"The proposition which I invited you and the gentlemen present to consider, as leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League, was that, given the great importance of ensuring harmonious working at the centre, you should enter upon discussions between yourselves with a view to discovering whether you could reach a basis of agreement between yourselves in the provincial field, consequent on which you could let me have proposals which would result in representatives of your two organisations immediately participating in the Central Government as members of my Executive Council".

Mr. Gandhi's Evasion

Mr. Jinnah accepted the proposal of the Viceroy. But both Mr. Gandhi and B. Rajendra Prasad would not look at it and were not prepared even to discuss with the leader of the Muslim League the proposals for composing the differences that existed in an acute form between the Hindus and the Musalmans. In their letter of November 3, they wrote to the Viceroy as follows:—

"This crisis is entirely political and is not related to the communal issue in India .....It has pained us to find the communal question being dragged in this connection .....It has clouded the main issue".

"They went on insisting for the declaration of war aims in pursuance of the resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee with a view to avoid the adjustment of Hindu Muslim relations in the Provincial sphere which was required for working together of the League and Congress representatives in the Centre.

This very much disappointed Mr. Jinnah who wrote to his Excellency the Viceroy:---

"I was imformed by them (Mr. Gandhi and B. Rajendra Prasad finally that they had come to the conclusion that they could not discuss any questions with regard to matters referred to in your letter of the 2nd instant relating to the provincial field or at the Centre until the British Government had complied with their demand as embodied in the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee, hence these two questions were not further discussed."

Mr. Jinnah's Efforts

In the meantime Mr. Jinnah, who had a clear grasp of the internationnl situation and wanted the Muslims to take full share in the defence of India, continued his efforts to settle matters with the Viceroy. Accordingly the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League passed the following resolution on